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Services Proposes Delisting Carolina Plant from Endangered Species Act Due to Recovery

Following a review of the best-available science, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing to delist the dwarf-flowered heartleaf from the Endangered Species Act (ESA) due to recovery. The move represents years of ESA-inspired collaborations between state, federal and local stakeholders on behalf of the North Carolina and South Carolina plant.

When the plant was listed as threatened under the ESA in 1989, there were only 24 known populations, distributed across eight counties. Today, there are at least 119 populations scattered across 10 North Carolina and three South Carolina counties. Of those 119 populations, 27 have more than 1,000 plants.

“The dwarf-flowered heartleaf is an excellent example of a conservation success story,” said Leo Miranda, Regional Director for the Service. “The plant grows in an area experiencing a fair amount of development, and a variety of organizations have worked together to conserve this species. Thanks to the collaborative efforts of our many partners from federal and state governments, to industry and non-governmental organizations, this native plant can thrive for generations to come.”

The dwarf-flowered heartleaf is currently found in Greenville, Spartanburg and Cherokee counties in South Carolina. It is also found in Polk, Rutherford, Cleveland, Gaston, Lincoln, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Alexander and Iredell counties in North Carolina. As its name implies, the plant has heart-shaped leaves that are dark green and grow from a buried stem. It rarely grows more than six inches tall.

Duke Energy and the North Carolina Department of Transportation are some of the greatest contributors to the conservation of this species. The Nature Conservancy, Foothills Conservancy and Catawba Lands Conservancy have also played major roles in the conservation of this plant by permanently acquiring and protecting land where this species grows.

The Service uses the best available science to make ESA listing determinations. The proposal to delist the dwarf-flowered heartleaf will publish in the *Federal Register* on Monday, April 26, 2021. The public comment period for the proposed listing will be open for 60 days. Instructions on how to submit comments are available at [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) under docket No. FWS-R4-ES-2019-0081. Following the comment period, the Service will make a final listing determination regarding this matter.

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